

The Bible, Thomas Hobbes, and The State of Nature

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Stephen E. Westlund

Dr. Stephen Ashby

Dr. Stephen Ashby

Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

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Purpose of Thesis

This discussion of the philosophic *State of Nature* examines the original state of man within the context of the Bible and the philosophic thought of Thomas Hobbes. From man's original condition, as recorded in the book of Genesis, the discussion turns to an explanation of the fall of man and the fallen nature of man. The fallen nature of man is incorporated into the explanation of Hobbes's *State of Nature*, as this work seeks to establish that Hobbes's political thought is based on the study of the fallen nature of man. Finally, there is an explanation of the solution offered by Hobbes for the *State of Nature*, which he describes war-like, and there is a Biblical solution offered concerning the fallen nature of man.

1

What is Man?

“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. When I consider your heavens, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him rule over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”¹

In His own image, God created man, wholly good and pure and innocent. He was given freedom over his own will and desires, by the Creator. It was in this freedom that man rejected the goodness of God, hoping to somehow become like God. In rejecting God, this good and pure and innocent man became fallen. Innocence was lost, his purity became blemished, and his goodness turned into evil. Nothing remained within man that was good in or of himself. Consequently, man, in this fallen state,

¹ The Thompson Chain-Reference Bible: NIV, 2nd ed., (Indianapolis: B.B. Kirkbride Bible Co., Inc., 1990) Psalm 8:1,3-9.

desperately seeks to understand the world about him, in which he is separated from his Creator by the corruption of the *Self*. He consults a fallen wisdom that is acquired through the observation of a fallen world. Lacking the sovereign wisdom of the Creator, man seeks, through his own methods, to explain how life is and how it ought to be. However, his explanations are only temporary. It is only by the wisdom and grace of God that true and lasting solutions will be achieved.

2

The Biblical State of Nature

The *State of Nature* is “a philosophic device employed by Thomas Hobbes as a means of hypothesizing about human nature in a pre-political state, which is a state without external constraints on behavior.”² It arose out of a philosophic movement, during the 17th and 18th centuries, known as *Liberalism*. Philosophers, such as Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, sought to change the miserable conditions of the societies in which they lived. They believed that in order to know and establish the best living conditions for man, it is necessary to first understand the very nature of man. In an effort to gain a better understanding of human nature, moral philosophers used a theoretical, abstract existence of man, which Hobbes labeled the *State of Nature*. The *State of Nature* examines how man might have existed, in his natural condition, separate from civil society and bound by no government.

Careful study of the creation story, recorded in the book of Genesis, will reveal man in a condition very similar to the philosophic *State of Nature*. Man, newly created, finds himself alone in the world, separate from civil

² Joseph Losco and Leonard Williams, eds., Political Theory: Classic Writings, Contemporary Views (New York: St. Martin's Press 1992) 231.

society, and bound by no government. In this natural state man is constrained by only one rule, a rule which is set within the context of great freedom. God tells him, “you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it, you will surely die.”³ This constraint is intended to protect, rather than limit man.

“The Lord God took man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”⁴ In the garden, which is man’s natural state, he is free. However, this liberty is not absolute, not in the sense that some understand absolute liberty. Man is afforded the option to do as he sees fit in every and all circumstances, but he is not afforded freedom from consequence. There is a consequence, good or bad, pleasant or painful, for every action man undertakes. If he chooses not to work, which he is free to do, it is likely that he will not eat. Although work limits the absolute freedom of man, it is through work that man provides for himself, ensuring his continued existence. He works so that all of his time doesn’t have to be used searching for food, thus allowing him to pursue other areas of interest. This does not mean that man, through work, seeks to acquire property. He has no need for the acquisition of and accumulation of property in this Garden environment. By nature, all that is needed is provided. It is man’s responsibility to care for these provisions.

³ Genesis 2:17.

⁴ Genesis 2:15.

The liberty of man, in his natural state, is also limited in that he is instructed by the Creator not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This constraint, although limiting absolute freedom, carries with it a great quality of freedom, that being the freedom to choose, or freedom of the will. The presence of the forbidden tree within the garden provides man with the opportunity to freely choose for himself the path that he will go. If man had been created merely to follow and do the will of the Creator, then he would not truly be free. The *Self* of the man would not belong to him, but would be under the control of the Master. The ability of an entity to exercise true choice, by an act of *will* through the *Self*, is the essence of freedom.

The *Self* is composed of the body, which is the physical nature, the heart, which is the emotional nature, and the mind, which is the intellectual nature. The *Self* is also a dual reflection of the *spirit* and the *will*. The *spirit* of man, in his natural state, is pure, innocent, and inclined toward good. The *will* is neither inclined toward good or evil, but rather toward determining which needs and or desires, of the *Self*, should be acted upon. The *Self* seeks decisions of the *will* regarding needs and desires, while concurrently consulting the *spirit* for moral guidance. Ultimately, the *Self* is morally, physically, emotionally, and intellectually driven.

The *spirit*, which provides moral guidance for the *Self*, should not be mistaken for the *soul*. The *soul* of man is the immaterial, eternal, inner being of man. When the body passes away, the *soul* remains. The *soul*

freely interacts with the *Self*, the *will*, and the *spirit* of man. Various aspects of the *Self*, such as emotions and intellect are present in the *soul*. It's nature is reflected in the *spirit* which is expressed through the *Self* by actions of the *will*. In turn, actions of the *Self* influence the condition of the *soul* through the *spirit*.

Man, in his natural state, is given complete control of the *Self*. Every action taken is a product of the *Self*, reflecting the decisions of the *will* and the guidance of the *spirit*. The *will*, though guided by the *spirit*, stands independent of the *spirit*, and ultimately is the final voice for the *Self*, regarding needs and desires. The *spirit* influences the moral condition of the *Self*. However, if the *Self* and the *will* are in conflict with the *spirit*, the *Self* holds the ability to disregard the guidance of the *spirit*.

The moral guidance of the *spirit* is a major component of the *Self*, and it greatly influences every action of the *Self*. Therefore, the *Self* naturally will only disregard the *spirit* if the desire within the *Self* is extreme. The interaction of the *Self* and *spirit* produces within man, in his natural state, an outward focus of the *Self*.

Adam was alone in the Biblical State of Nature. In fact, he was the only human being on the planet. Consequently, the outward focus of the *Self* was expressed entirely through a love for God. Naturally, there is a great desire within man to be in communion with God, and in the *Biblical State of Nature*, man was in perfect communion with God. As man is in communion with God, he seeks to know, love, and please God, and it is only

— through communion with God that man is able to truly discover his identity and fully understand his purpose.

God, being in nature spirit, interacts with the *spirit* of man. Through the *spirit*, God challenges and teaches the intellect of man, tends to the emotional needs of man, and provides for, heals, and sustains the physical nature of man. However, the *Self* also desires to interact intellectually, emotionally, and physically, but outside of his relationship with the Creator, man was alone. “The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’ Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.”⁵ The woman would later be named Eve. From the creation of Eve, it can be — concluded that by nature, man is isolated and alone, but it is not good for him to be alone, so he seeks community. Although the scriptures reveal that man was alone in his natural state, for the purposes of this study, it is useful to hypothesize how man would react if he came in contact with other members of the human species, in the *Biblical State of Nature*.

Life is given to all living creatures by the Creator, who is the sovereign God. In giving man life, God also gives man the right to protect that life. However, in the *Biblical State of Nature*, man does not need to protect his life against the advancements of his fellow man. The outward focus of the *Self* seeks the betterment of all men. Therefore, the *Self* within man would actually seek to protect the lives of his fellow men and women.

⁵ Genesis 2:18, 22.

With regards to liberty, all men are equal in the eyes of God. From this equality, it follows that all men have the right to be free. As with the right to life, the liberty of man is protected by the outward focus of the *Self*. An outward-focused *Self* does not seek to hurt others or infringe on others' freedom in order to meet needs and desires. Rather, the outward focus of the *Self* protects the liberty of all men.

The same can be concluded for the notion of property and the desire for and acquisition of property. The outward focus of the *Self*, in the *Biblical State of Nature*, essentially makes property inconsequential. The notion of property allows the individual to acquire wealth and a place of standing within community. However, the outward focus of the *Self* drives the individual to place community over the individual. Therefore, if the outward-focused individual acquires property, he does so to better the community. Furthermore, man, being in perfect communion with God, has all that he needs provided for him by the Creator. Because all that man is and all that man has is from God, in essence, all that man possesses belongs to God. Consequently, in the *Biblical State of Nature*, personal property is of virtually no significance.

In the *Biblical State of Nature*, man is without flaw. He is perfect and innocent. This perfect innocence allows man to exist without shame. "The man and woman were both naked, and they felt no shame."⁶ The concept and the knowledge of evil is unknown to man. He only is aware of the

⁶ Genesis 2:25.

goodness of the Creator and the goodness within his *spirit*. Consequently, if man were to come in contact with another man, they would treat each other with kindness and goodness, flowing from the outward focus of the *Self*.

There would be no competition. Each would respect the other and would seek the betterment of the other. The outward focus of the *Self* allows man to live without fear of his fellow man. As every man places the community over the individual, all live in safety because all seek to help and protect one another. Life in the *Biblical State of Nature* is fulfilling, easy, peaceful, and long.

3

Fallen

Adam and Eve were enjoying a peaceful walk through the garden, which God had prepared for them, when Eve looked up and saw the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She looked at the fruit of this forbidden tree and saw that it was indeed desirable. However, she remembered the instructions given by God not to eat the fruit of this tree and turned away from it. When she turned to walk away, the serpent, who was Lucifer the devil, was waiting to tempt her.

The serpent said to her, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"⁷ Eve considered the question as she looked at the beauty of the garden about her. She looked at her husband and then turned her attention to the serpent and said, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it or you will die.'"⁸ The serpent, seeking to tempt and deceive now had his opportunity. He said, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."⁹

⁷ Genesis 3:1.

⁸ Genesis 3:2-3.

⁹ Genesis 3:4-5.

Eve again looked at her husband, but he said nothing. He knew in his *spirit* that they should not eat the fruit of the forbidden tree, but he was overcome with curiosity, and he remained silent. Eve then turned to face the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. “She saw that the fruit was good and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom.”¹⁰

Two desires were stirring within the *Self* of Eve. First, she desired to taste the fruit. But this was certainly not the first time she had had this desire. The fruit itself was not enough to persuade Eve to reject God’s instructions. However, on this occasion, there was a greater desire, which had been introduced by Satan. Eve had been tempted with the opportunity to become like God. She desired the wisdom that the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil offered. In her *spirit* she knew that it was wrong to eat this forbidden fruit, but the desire to be like God was extreme. Although she was capable of resisting the temptation, she did not. The creature sought to become like the Creator, and Eve took the fruit and ate it.

Once Eve had eaten the fruit she gave some to Adam. He saw that she did not die, as God had warned. He also saw that the fruit was desirable. Furthermore, he too desired to be like God. Although he knew it was wrong to disobey God, he was overcome by his desire to be like God. He took the fruit from his wife and ate it.

¹⁰ Genesis 3:6.

The temptation of Adam and Eve and the sin as result of this temptation raises two difficult questions. First, it has been established that by nature, the *spirit* of man is wholly good, pure, and innocent. Therefore, it is always inclined toward that which is good. Because the *spirit* is wholly good, one can conclude that it is free from evil. Consequently, it is not subject to the temptation of evil. How then was it possible that the serpent tempted Adam and Eve?

The temptation of Adam and Eve can be understood by examining the *Self* and the *will* of man. By nature, the *will* is inclined to neither good nor evil. The *Self*, although influenced by the *spirit*, is independent of the *spirit* and is capable of producing desires contrary to the guidance of the *spirit*. It was the *Self* and the *will* of man that were tempted by the serpent.

This raises the second question. If, in the natural state, the *spirit*, which is good, guides the *Self* and the *will* of man, why then did Adam and Eve succumb to temptation? The answer to this question can be understood through the examination of the relationship between the *Self*, the *will*, and the *spirit*. It has been established that in the natural state, the outward focus of the *Self* causes within man a desire to have knowledge of and to be in communion with the supernatural. Satan, preying upon this desire, told Eve that she could be like God. The possibility to become like God produced an immense desire within the *Self* of Eve. The *spirit* of Eve pleaded with her *will* to disregard the *Self*, but the desire of the *Self* was extreme. The *Self* of Eve consumed the *spirit*, leaving her *will* to decide

without moral guidance. Eve's *will* concluded that more wisdom and knowledge was desirable. The *will* of Eve, without the guidance of her *spirit*, made the desire of the *Self*, a desire of the *will*. Eve's *Self* then acted upon the desire of her *will*, and she reached out, took the fruit, and ate it.

Adam and Eve chose to eat the forbidden fruit, and in doing so they rejected the instruction of God. The punishment for this original sin, as God had warned, was death. But they did not die a physical death. Instead, Adam and Eve suffered a spiritual death, which was the fall of man.

The fall of man occurred when Adam and Eve, by an act of the *will* displayed through the *Self*, chose to reject the instruction of God. This choice was an act of disobedience, which was a sin against God. The motivation for their disobedience was a selfish desire to become like God. In order for man, in his natural state, to act upon a selfish desire, he must first remove the *spirit* from the decision process. It has been established that the *spirit* provides the *Self* with an outward focus. An outward-focused individual would not be capable of a selfish action. Consequently, it became necessary for Adam and Eve to alter their outward focus. When the desire to become like God arose within Eve, the *Self* of Eve completely disregarded the guidance of her *spirit*. This turned the focus of her *Self* inward allowing her to proceed with a selfish action.

The turning inward of the *Self* brought the death of the *spirit*, which in turn led to the corruption of the *Self*. God had instructed, "you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it

you will surely die.”¹¹ Prior to the forbidden feast, man only knew goodness, for the *spirit* of man by nature was good, influencing the whole of man to be good as well. The act of eating the forbidden fruit, which more importantly, was an act of disobedience and rejection of God’s goodness, gave birth to evil within the *Self* of man.

When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, the Bible states that “their eyes were opened.”¹² This ‘opening’ of their eyes refers to the awareness of evil and the ability to distinguish evil from good. When the eyes of Adam and Eve were ‘opened,’ they realized that they were naked, “so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.”¹³ The need for Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness indicates shame, which was due to their sin, and the loss of their innocence. The lost innocence of man was replaced by evil within the *Self*. This evil sought to destroy that which was good within man, and in doing so, evil gave birth to the *sinful nature*.

The *sinful nature* is the imperfect and blemished nature of man, which contradicts the goodness of God and represents its opposite. It seeks to gratify the *Self* and the *Self* alone. “Those who live according to the *sinful nature* have their minds set on what that nature desires; the sinful mind is

¹¹ Genesis 2:17.

¹² Genesis 3:7a.

¹³ Genesis 3:7b.

hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the *sinful nature* cannot please God."¹⁴

The evil within the *Self* of man contradicted the goodness within the *spirit* of man, which was from God. Furthermore, the sin of disobedience and rejection against God, broke the perfect communion that man had experienced with God. The *Self*, turning inward upon its evil desires, forged a great divide between God and man. "Spiritual death is the separation of the *spirit* (of man) from God."¹⁵

Prior to the fall, man was full of life and goodness given by God, expressed through the *spirit* of man. It was through the fall that "man broke away from the real source of life and blessedness, and the result was a condition of spiritual death."¹⁶ The *spirit* of man continues to exist, but it is an existence that is apart from God. In the *Biblical State of Nature* the *spirit* was filled with God's goodness. Spiritual death was the result of the removal of the goodness of God from the *spirit*. The *spirit*, in place of God's goodness, was filled with a great emptiness. The *spirit*, after the Fall, retains its inclination toward that which is good, but emptiness rules. The *Self* is no longer guided by the goodness of the *spirit*, but rather by the desires of the *sinful nature*.

Without the guidance of the *spirit*, the *Self* is left to act, through the

¹⁴ Romans 8:5a, 7-8.

¹⁵ George P. Pardington, *Outline Studies in Christian Doctrine* (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing Company, 1926) 171.

¹⁶ L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1941) 226.

will, as it sees fit. The turning inward of the *Self*, which began when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, was completed with the corruption of the *Self*. The *Self* no longer sought to act in goodness as it once had when the *spirit* guided it. Rather, the *Self* only sought to gratify selfish desires. Man, who once sought to help his fellow man through acts of genuine goodness and kindness, began to look out for self-interests first. The corruption of the *Self*, which was produced by an inward focus of the *Self*, places the individual over community, and it creates competition and fear within society.

The consequences of the fall of man are extensive, and they reach beyond the persons of Adam and Eve. All future generations would suffer the consequences of the Fall. Several consequences, such as spiritual death, the corruption of the *Self*, and Sin's shame have been previously discussed. Further consequences, which generally flow from the death of the *spirit* and the corruption of the *Self* shall be given further discussion.

After Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit and had made coverings for their nakedness; "[they] heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden."¹⁷ The fall produced an estrangement between man and God, which was entirely man's doing. God remains unchanging, but through the fall, man broke his bond with God. Adam and Eve hid themselves because they knew in their very being that they had

¹⁷ Genesis 3:8.

separated themselves from God. “When Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God, it was because their sin with its resulting guilt and shame had morally unfitted them for personal and face-to-face communion and fellowship with their Maker.”¹⁸

Another consequence of the fall, was the judgment of God. “To the woman [God] said, ‘I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.’”¹⁹ This judgment upon the woman is of “sorrow and subjection.”²⁰ God’s judgment was also given to Adam. “To Adam he said, ‘Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.’”²¹ In the *Biblical State of Nature*, God placed man in the garden to work and take care of it, but work was easy and probably enjoyable. The Fall of man curses the work of man making it toilsome and difficult. The judgment of God upon the man was “sorrow and toil.”²²

Perhaps the greatest consequence of the Fall is the separation of man from God. This is due to spiritual death. Because man was separated from

¹⁸ Pardington 175,76.

¹⁹ Genesis 3:16.

²⁰ Pardington 173.

²¹ Genesis 3:17-19.

²² Pardington 173.

God in spirit, God consequently had to remove him from the Garden of Eden. "So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken."²³ This banishment from the garden essentially "separated man from the personal and visible presence of God. Separation from the Garden of Eden, therefore, simply sealed the spiritual separation of man from God which sin had already brought about."²⁴

The 'original sin' and the consequences of that sin did not end with Adam and Eve. The originality of the first sin committed by Adam and Eve can be understood in three distinct contexts. First, "it is derived from the original root of mankind."²⁵ Adam and Eve were the original parents of all of humanity. In this context, their first sin was original.

The second context of the originality of sin is that "it is present in each individual from the time of his birth."²⁶ The consequences of the first sin reach beyond Adam and Eve to include all future generations and the whole of creation as well. "The Fall introduced the universality of sin throughout the human race."²⁷ The universality of sin is expressed by the Psalmist. "The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside,

²³ Genesis 3:23.

²⁴ Pardington 176.

²⁵ Charles F. Pfeiffer, Howard F. Vos, and John Rea, eds., Wycliff Bible Dictionary (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1998) 589.

²⁶ Pfeiffer 589.

²⁷ Pfeiffer 589.

they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.”²⁸

The final context of the originality of sin is that “it is the inward root of all actual sins that defile the life of man.”²⁹ Original sin and the Fall of man produced within man an imperfect fallen nature. This fallen nature controls the whole of the *Self*, directs the *will* and consumes the emptiness of the *spirit*. Consequently, all of humanity, through the Fall of Adam, are prisoners to the fallen nature.

[Original] sin carried permanent pollution with it, and a pollution which, because of the solidarity of the human race, would affect not only Adam but all his descendents as well. As a result of the fall the father of the race could only pass on a depraved human nature to his offspring. From that unholy source sin flows on as an impure stream to all the generations of men, polluting everyone and everything with which it comes in contact.

[Furthermore], Adam sinned not only as the father of the human race, but also as the representative head of all his descendants; and therefore the guilt of his sin is placed to their account, so that they are all liable to the punishment of death. It is primarily in that sense that Adam’s sin is sin of all.³⁰

The Apostle Paul writes, “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all

²⁸ Psalm 14:2,3.

²⁹ Pfeiffer 589.

³⁰ Berkhof 221.

men, because all have sinned.”³¹ This passage in Romans teaches that all have sinned, and it is in Adam that all sin. Adam passed the sinful nature, which was born in him as a result of his original sin and the fall, to all future generations. “It is the Fall of the human race in Adam that we are given the explanation why children are born sinners, why some die in infancy, and why all who survive, regardless of race, culture, and ancestry, commit voluntary transgressions.”³²

The *Self* of man, prior to the original sin, was focused outward as a reflection of the goodness of the *spirit*. The turning inward of the *Self*, which coincided with the death of the *spirit*, resulted in the corruption of the *Self*, which is reflected in the *sinful nature* of man. The death of the *spirit* and the corruption of the *Self* placed man in his current condition... Fallen.

The fallen nature of man is expressed by the inward focus of the *Self*, the emptiness within the *spirit*, and the imprisoning enslavement of the *soul*. “For a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.”³³ Fallen man is mastered by the corrupted, inward focus of the *Self*, which was turned inward by the original sin of the *Self*, causing the death of the *spirit*, which condemns the *soul* to a punishment of death. Consequently, the *soul* of fallen man, sensing a dire need of escape and freedom from condemnation, battles the *Self* to be free.

The *soul* of fallen man is insufficiently equipped to wage the battle for

³¹ Romans 5:12.

³² Pfeiffer 589.

³³ II Peter 2:19b.

freedom against the corrupted *Self*. Although the fallen *soul* fights a losing battle, the war is not lost. The possibility of freedom for the *soul* will be discussed later. It is necessary, however, to first discuss one man's attempt to provide solutions for the corrupt tendencies of fallen man.

4

Thomas Hobbes

Thomas Hobbes, in the midst of political upheaval and the aftermath of the English civil war, wrote *Leviathan* (1651). "He remarked at the end of it that it had been 'occasioned by the disorders of the present time.'"³⁴

Hobbes, no doubt greatly troubled by considerable disorder within society, sought to provide solutions for society by gaining a better understanding of human nature. In order to do this, he employed a theoretical *State of Nature*.

Hobbes, studying fallen man, understood human psychology to be passion driven, and he gave little credit to man's ability to reason. He believed that human reason is self-serving and is used merely as a tool of passion. This relationship between passion and reason is reflected in the relationship between the *Self* and the *will* of fallen man. The *will* draws on the reason of the *Self* in order to acquire and satisfy passions and desires of the *Self*.

Along with passions, the notion of fear is also central to Hobbes's political and philosophical thought. In fact, "Hobbes, referring to the fact that his mother gave birth to him prematurely on hearing the frightful news

³⁴ Maurice Cranston, ed., Western Political Philosophers (London: The Bodley Head, 1964) 45.

of the coming of the Spanish Armada, said, 'Fear and I were born twins.'³⁵ The fallen nature of man breeds fear and distrust within the *Self* of man. Consequently, as Hobbes studied fallen man, he gave considerable attention to the notion of fear.

Life in Hobbes's *State of Nature* is an existence of fear and uncertainty. "Hobbes presents the *State of Nature* as a condition of war 'of every man against every man' (*Leviathan*, ch.13), which arises first from the natural equality of all human beings."³⁶ Hobbes's notion of equality within the *State of Nature* is one of vulnerability. According to Hobbes, even "the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others' (*Leviathan*, ch.13)."³⁷ This ability of anyone to kill anyone else places all in equal standing.

Hobbes believed that the equality of man within the *State of Nature* leads to a natural state of conflict. "And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies' (*Leviathan*, ch.13)."³⁸ Hobbes refers to this state of conflict as diffidence. It is from diffidence that man naturally progresses into a state of war. "This state of war consists either in actual fighting or the known disposition to it and it produces a deprived uncivilized lifestyle in which there is no industry, trade, agriculture and 'no knowledge of the face of the

³⁵ David Muschamp, ed., *Political Thinkers* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986) 77.

³⁶ Muschamp 80.

³⁷ Losco 235.

³⁸ Losco 236.

earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continued fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short' (*Leviathan*, ch.13)."³⁹

Hobbes paints a picture of the *State of Nature* as a dreadful, awful, insecure condition—a condition in which “the notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have there no place. Where there is no common power, there is no law: where no law, no injustice. Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues’ (*Leviathan*, ch.13).”⁴⁰ Hobbes believed notions such as right and wrong, and just and unjust only have meaning within the context of civil society. In order to attain justice and morals, he argues that the passions with reason may be used to move man from the *State of Nature* into civilized society.

It has been previously noted that Hobbes believed the psychology of man to be passion driven. Among the various passions within man, according to Hobbes, “the passions that incline men to peace, are fear of death’ (*Leviathan*, ch.13).”⁴¹ Consequently, the fear of death is the solution to the natural state of war.

Hobbes employs two laws of nature to establish a method by which man may pass from a *State of Nature* into a civilized state. The first is “that every man, ought to endeavor peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it’

³⁹ Muschamp 80.

⁴⁰ Losco 238.

⁴¹ Losco 238.

(*Leviathan*, ch.14).⁴² This fundamental law of nature is to “seek peace, and follow it’ (*Leviathan*, ch.14).⁴³

Hobbes acknowledges, in reference to the fundamental law of nature, that “when man cannot obtain peace, he may seek, and use all helps, and advantages of war’ (*Leviathan*, ch.14).⁴⁴ From this statement, it can be concluded that within the fundamental law of nature, there is a notion of self-preservation. All desire to survive; consequently, man in *the State of Nature* will do whatever is necessary in order to ensure survival.

Hobbes’s second law of nature flows from the first. He argued “that a man be willing, when others are so too, as far-forth, as for peace, and defense of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and to be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow against himself’ (*Leviathan*, ch.14).⁴⁵ In short, Hobbes’s second law of nature is the laying down of all rights in order to better secure life. It is through this law of nature that Hobbes builds a contract between individual members within the *State of Nature*. However, for a contract to be valid, there must be a means of enforcement. Hobbes introduces the Sovereign as the enforcer.

The Sovereign is the ultimate power within society. The Sovereign may be a body of individuals or an independent individual serving as King.

⁴² Losco 239.

⁴³ Losco 239.

⁴⁴ Losco 239.

⁴⁵ Losco 239.

The Sovereign's duty is to enforce the contract. Consequently, in order for the rule of the Sovereign to be effective, the Sovereign is not subject to the contract but is above the law.

Thomas Hobbes is not the only philosopher to suggest a social contract as a means by which to escape the *State of Nature*. "John Locke (1632-1704), Jean-Jacque Rousseau (1712-1782), and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) also attempted to justify the existence of the state by viewing it as the product of a social contract."⁴⁶ *Social Contract theory* is based on the notion that the state is a human institution, and membership within the state is voluntary. Governments are established by means of a contract, with the fundamental purpose of securing natural rights of the governed. Governments protect the rights of the governed by way of a transfer of rights. According to Hobbes, "the mutual transferring of rights, is that which men call Contract' (*Leviathan*, ch.14)."⁴⁷

Hobbes's contract takes form in the commonwealth, which serves the purpose of security. According to Hobbes, the commonwealth "is a real unity of them all, in [the commonwealth], made by covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if every man should say to every man, 'I authorize and give up my right of governing myself, to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and

⁴⁶ Gary Percesepe, *Philosophy, An Introduction to the Labor of Reason*, Ed. Helen McNinnis (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1991) 688.

⁴⁷ Losco 240.

authorize all actions in like manner' (*Leviathan*, ch.17)."⁴⁸ This unity of all men under one power, according to Hobbes, is the Commonwealth.

The *State of Nature* and social contract offered by Hobbes is merely one possible philosophic solution that was offered to correct the wrongs within sixteenth and seventeenth century Western society. As previously noted, philosophers such as Locke, Rousseau, and Kant would follow in Hobbes's footsteps and would themselves propose various versions of the social contract. The philosophies of those that followed Hobbes, would often contradict one another, and certainly were found in contradiction to Hobbes's own view. But each in his own right offered profound insight concerning human nature.

⁴⁸ Losco 247.

5

A Lasting Solution

The *State of Nature*, the social contract, and the commonwealth of Thomas Hobbes are the result of fallen man's philosophy concerning fallen man. Moral philosophers that followed Hobbes also offered philosophic solutions to the miserable conditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by way of understanding human nature. However, their philosophies are philosophies of fallen men, on fallen man as well. Although great philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant offer profound philosophies of necessary solutions to poor living conditions, these solutions ultimately fail. This is the essence of fallen man. All that he is and all that he produces, essentially is temporary.

The term temporary is meant in no way to belittle the work of these great thinkers. The temporary solutions offered by moral and political philosophers no doubt serve their purpose. It should be noted that the words of John Locke still live on, although slightly altered by Thomas Jefferson, in America's Declaration of Independence. 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.' However, it should also be noted

that even the greatest powers and empires that this world has known, founded upon the most profound political philosophy, were not invincible. The fall of the Holy Roman Empire can attest to this.

Temporary solutions, such as government, law, and justice are necessary to provide conditions in which people can continue their existence. But the fact remains that these are only temporary solutions. This creates a need to discover a solution that will be lasting. Although within powerful nations, such as the U.S., people often enjoy peaceful and fulfilling lives, the condition of the fallen *soul* of man cries out for a solution to its blemished existence.

The *soul* of fallen man is comparable to Thomas Hobbes's State of Nature. It is an existence of solitary isolation. Outwardly, man seeks to find satisfaction in the things of this world. Inwardly, the *soul* suffers as a result of the great emptiness found in the *spirit*, which manifests itself throughout the whole of man. The inward focus of the *Self*, the source of the emptiness within man, opposes the goodness of God and places the fallen *soul* of man in bondage. This essentially places the *soul* in a condition of spiritual war. Man outwardly seeks to fill the emptiness found in the *spirit* by way of the *Self*, but the material world can offer no relief for the suffering of the *soul*. Essentially, the *soul* of fallen man is in a condition that is 'solitary, poor, and nasty.'

The *soul* is trapped and imprisoned by the *sinful nature*, which is expressed by the inward focus of the *Self*. The *spirit* of man desires that the

soul be set free, but emptiness reigns. The *soul* will only be set free when the emptiness of the *spirit* is quenched.

Though man seeks to fill the *spirit* and *soul* with pleasures of the earth, apart from God, all of man's searching is futile. For only the Truth of God, in Christ Jesus, is able to fill the emptiness of the *spirit* and set the *soul* free. And Jesus said, "the truth will set you free...I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."⁴⁹

Prior to the Fall, the *spirit* of man was in perfect communion with God. The Fall broke that bond and created a great chasm between God and man. Jesus Christ, through His death and resurrection, has made it possible for man to bridge the gap between man and God, and return to a place of communion with God. Christ does this by filling the *spirit* of the man, who by an act of *will* chooses to believe in the Name and Lordship of Christ. The emptiness within the *spirit* is quenched, setting the *soul* free, and allowing Christ to live His life outward through the believer by the Spirit of God in place of the inward focus of the fallen *Self*.

When Christ fills the emptiness of the *spirit*, which resulted from the death of the *spirit*, the believer is made alive in Christ. The Apostle Paul writes:

⁴⁹ John 8:32b, 34-36.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world. All of us lived...gratifying the cravings of [the] sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works so that no one can boast.⁵⁰

It is only through the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus that the emptiness of the *spirit* is quenched allowing the *soul* of man to be freed from bondage, which in turn returns man to a place of communion with God. However, when Christ fills the emptiness of man's *spirit*, man is not returned to a place of perfect communion with God. Man is still fallen, and he struggles with the tendency of the fallen *Self* to consistently reject the goodness of God in Christ Jesus. The apostle Paul writes,

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

⁵⁰ Ephesians 2: 1-2a, 3-5a, 8-9.

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.⁵¹

There is a continuous struggle of the *spirit*, consumed as it is by the Spirit of God in Christ, standing against the fallen *Self*. It expresses the goal of gaining ultimate freedom for the *soul*. In the midst of this struggle, Paul exclaims, 'Who will rescue me from this body of death?' It is Christ who came to rescue all that choose to come to Him. Jesus said,

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet forfeit his very self?⁵²

The inward-focused *Self* of fallen man daily seeks to gain the world and all of its pleasures in order to fill the immense void created by the fall. Christ seeks to fill that void within every man, woman, boy and girl. He pursues this end which took Him to the cross for one purpose, and out of

⁵¹ Romans 7:15,17-25.

⁵² Luke 9:23-25.

— one motivation, love. The love of God is perfect, and from that love, many blessings flow. Perfect justice is included among these blessings—justice that condemns the sin of man inherited from Adam, punishable by death—justice that forgives the sin of all who choose to daily die to the desires of the sinful *Self*, which allows Christ to reign supreme. “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.”⁵³

A solution is most simply defined as an answer to a problem.

Throughout history there are countless instances in which a problem was in need of a solution. Many solutions offered by men and women may solve problems, but they are temporary, and eventually a new problem will arise from what was at one time a solution. The greatest problem that requires solving is sin—sin that corrupts, controls, and condemns the heart and soul of man. The Truth of God in Christ Jesus is the only solution to the many problems caused by sin, and to sin itself. Unlike the solutions of man, Jesus is the only lasting and eternal solution.

⁵³ I Corinthians 15:22

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